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Chris West
Headteacher
Mount Wise Community Primary School
James Street
Devonport
Plymouth
PL1 4LA

Dear Mr. West

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Mount Wise Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 February 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy-headteacher and assistant headteacher, representatives of the governing body and the subject leaders for English and mathematics. He also met representatives of the local authority and the Plymouth Teaching Schools Alliance. The school's development and subject action plans were evaluated. HMI looked at documents related to subject improvement and discussed the systems for reviewing the quality of teaching and tracking pupils' attainment and progress.

Context

The school is part of the Plymouth Teaching Schools Alliance. Significant changes to the teaching staff took effect during this academic year.

Main findings

The school has adapted its plans to address the key areas for improvement identified at the recent inspection. Senior leaders have begun to take concerted action to address weaker teaching and to stabilise staffing but there remains more to do. They have a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning in English and mathematics. Subject leaders carefully check the effectiveness of the extra help arranged for pupils who need to catch up with their basic skills. They do not check how well new approaches to teaching in the subjects are used across the school. Leaders have not always been using findings from visits to lessons alongside other evidence, such as those made on pupils' work in their books. This limits how accurately they can measure how well teaching promotes good learning over time.

The development plan makes clear how leaders have regular meetings with each teacher to discuss the progress pupils are making. This is helping hold all staff to account for raising standards, although it is at an early stage. However, the plan does not include detailed actions showing how all staff will be helped to consistently set challenging work for all pupils. It lacks clear questions to help leaders and governors gauge the extent of progress made with the plan.

Clear steps are being taken to plan for the governing body's development, including the appointment of additional governors with relevant experience and expertise. Governors recognise the need to continue to attend training so that they are able to fully hold leaders to account for the school's performance.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommends that further action is taken to:

- rigorously address weaker teaching and strengthen staffing arrangements
- clarify in the plans how teaching will be further developed, with the support of the Plymouth Teaching Schools Alliance
- include questions in the plans through which the extent of progress made with actions taken can be tested
- work with the local authority and partner schools in order to further strengthen the role of the governing body
- review with HMI, the impact of the school's improvement work.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority, in close partnership with the Plymouth Teaching Schools Alliance, has been providing effective support for senior leaders in addressing the school's improvement goals. It has also been active in helping the governing body in

its development and in enabling teachers to visit colleagues in linked schools to see outstanding teaching.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Plymouth.

Yours sincerely

David Townsend
Her Majesty's Inspector